

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Date of transcription 2/4/80

Congressman JOHN P. MURTHA was contacted at his residence at 109 Colgate Avenue, Johnstown, Pennsylvania and advised of the identities of [redacted] and [redacted] as Special Agents (SAs) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). MURTHA was advised that in accordance with an official investigation, information was sought regarding his relationship with HOWARD CRIDEN, MEL WEINBERG and TONY DE VITO. MURTHA was then presented with a form, entitled "Interrogation; Advice of Rights" which he read and stated he understood. MURTHA returned the form, unsigned, and stated that he did not require a lawyer. He then advised he was willing to be interviewed and provided the following narrative:

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MURTHA formerly served in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve with LOUIS JOHANSON, who is currently the law partner of HOWARD CRIDEN. Approximately two to three weeks prior to the date of interview, MURTHA received a telephone call from either JOHANSON or CRIDEN. During the telephone conversation, reference was made to a newspaper article in the Philadelphia Bulletin which described MURTHA's influence as a member of Congress. MURTHA was then invited to join CRIDEN in meeting with the representatives of individuals desiring to obtain entry into the U.S. MURTHA replied that he would be glad to meet with these persons in his office but was told that these individuals would be more comfortable if they could meet at their residence in Washington, D.C.

On either a Thursday or Friday, approximately two to three weeks prior to interview date, MURTHA was picked up by CRIDEN and taken to the meeting at the townhouse residence of these individuals.

At the townhouse, MURTHA was introduced to two individuals named TONY and MEL. He did not recall the last names of these individuals but described TONY as the darker and younger of the two. MURTHA was informed by one of these individuals that they represented a wealthy sheik from a Middle Eastern country, who desired assistance in obtaining entry into the U.S. at an unspecified future date. MURTHA

Investigation on 2/2/80 at Johnstown, Pennsylvania File # BQ 87-81067 - 952
by SAS [redacted] and [redacted] EJG/mn 2/2/80
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replied that he would check into the situation to determine what the requirements were to secure admission into the country.

MURTHA had been informed by CRIDEN prior to the meeting that the sheik possessed vast assets, as high as \$200 million, and could possibly be persuaded to invest a substantial amount of money in MURTHA's congressional district. In light of this, MURTHA informed TONY and MEL that he would provide assistance to the sheik to obtain entry into the U.S. in return for investments by the sheik, made in his congressional district, to assist in creating jobs. MURTHA explained to them that investment in his district was necessary for him to justify acting on the sheik's behalf.

During the course of this meeting, it appeared to MURTHA that TONY and MEL were willing to offer money to insure that the assistance sought would be secured. He recalled that they indicated to him that they liked to be "up front". At one point during the meeting, while CRIDEN and one of the individuals were out of the room, the other individual opened a drawer and displayed a large amount of cash to MURTHA. MURTHA expressed no interest in receiving money, but reiterated that his assistance could be obtained through investments in his district.

MURTHA recalled that during the meeting, CRIDEN left the room more than once with MEL and TONY individually, while the other remained with him.

Subsequent to the meeting, MURTHA contacted a high ranking official with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), who may possibly be named [REDACTED] (Phonetic) and asked him if a wealthy individual would encounter any difficulty in obtaining admission into the U.S. The official informed MURTHA that an individual with at least \$40,000 in assets would not have any difficulty entering the country, since he would not be required to have a sponsor.

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MURTHA telephoned CRIDEN and relayed to him the information he obtained from the INS official. MURTHA stressed, however, that he still desired the sheik to make investments in his district.

MURTHA then contacted a friend of his and asked him what could be accomplished with a forty to fifty million dollar investment, emphasizing that the investors did not desire to operate a business. He was told that a firm named Abex (Phonetic) might need money or that a bank could be purchased with such an amount. He was also told that an investment of this size would be a help to the coal producing industry. MURTHA informed his friend that the representatives of the investor would hire an expert to examine any potential investment and MURTHA could not guarantee that his recommendations would be followed.

MURTHA's friend also advised him that a deposit of five million dollars made into a bank would be considered an important sum.

MURTHA subsequently telephoned CRIDEN and told him of the information supplied by his friend regarding investments and deposits. He also asked CRIDEN to obtain specifics regarding the sheik so that they could commence working with the INS toward his entry into the U.S.

Subsequent to the above narrative statement, MURTHA provided the following information pursuant to questioning by the interviewing agents:

MURTHA has known CRIDEN only since he was contacted by him approximately two to three weeks prior to interview date. If they had met prior to that it was only on a purely social level and was not recalled by MURTHA.

CRIDEN said, to the best of MURTHA's recollection, that there was a lot of money available for investment from the sheik through TONY and MEL. CRIDEN stated that he had

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checked them out with a bank through a contact of his and it was confirmed that they had a substantial sum of money.

MURTHA first met with CRIDEN on the same day as the meeting, which took place during the congressional recess in January, 1980. This was also the first and only time MURTHA ever met TONY and MEL.

At the meeting in the townhouse, MURTHA told TONY and MEL that his only interest was creating additional jobs in his district and that before he could take any action on the sheik's behalf, he had to determine if it were possible to obtain an individual's entry into the country.

There was no question in his mind that TONY and MEL wanted to pay him for any assistance but he made it clear to them that he wanted investment in the district, not payoffs.

On the way back to the Rayburn Building where CRIDEN had picked him up earlier, MURTHA observed that CRIDEN did not seem happy and was subdued. MURTHA told CRIDEN that he believed they could work out some sort of legitimate investment in the district.

MURTHA provided the following chronology for the events transpiring from the day of the meeting:

CRIDEN telephoned MURTHA and told him of the arrangements for the meeting. MURTHA was later picked up by CRIDEN in a chauffeured limousine in front of the Rayburn Building. They were driven to the townhouse which CRIDEN described as the residence of the sheik when he visits Washington, D.C. The meeting took place and he was driven back to the Rayburn Building with CRIDEN in the limousine. He told CRIDEN that he would check to determine if they could affect the sheik's entry into the U.S.

Approximately a week later, MURTHA, after checking with the INS official, telephoned CRIDEN and told him that

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the entry could be accomplished. He asked CRIDEN to obtain information regarding the identity of the sheik, his country and when he desired to enter the U.S. He encouraged CRIDEN to take action to get investments for MURTHA's district.

MURTHA was in telephone contact with C. CRIDEN on only two occasions subsequent to the meeting with TONY and MEL. The first call was primarily to obtain information and later to tell him of the results of his conversation with the INS official.

MURTHA also told CRIDEN that his friend had advised him that a deposit of one million dollars would have no impact on a bank, as was suggested at the meeting with TONY and MEL, but that a sum of five million would be important to a bank.

MURTHA did not know if CRIDEN was aware of any offer of money by TONY and MEL. MURTHA did not feel that the money was directly offered to him. It was shown and a payment was implied since TONY or MEL said that MURTHA's assistance was worth "such and such". But MURTHA was interested in obtaining jobs in his district for some such endeavor as a coke works. MURTHA would not take a phone number from TONY or MEL and he told them that he would deal through CRIDEN.

MURTHA considered CRIDEN the agent of TONY and MEL and was sure that CRIDEN was to be paid. He was not aware of CRIDEN acting in the role of lobbyist and he had no knowledge of CRIDEN contacting anyone at INS regarding the regulations for admission to the U.S.

MURTHA was aware of the names of two other congressmen being mentioned at the meeting with TONY and MEL but he declined to name them. One of these congressmen came to MURTHA and told him that he needed MURTHA's help. He told MURTHA that they each had a chance for investment possibilities in their districts and asked MURTHA if he was interested. MURTHA replied that he was always interested in investments in his district.

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When asked by the interviewing agents if the names of Congressmen JOHN MURPHY and FRANK THOMPSON were mentioned, MURTHA replied that the name of MURPHY and THOMPSON were mentioned as having had dealings with TONY and MEL. No indication was made of any money being paid to them and MURTHA felt that their names were mentioned in order to put pressure on him to assist them.

When asked if any specific amount of money was mentioned to him, MURTHA stated that a figure of fifty thousand was mentioned at the meeting. MURTHA did not know what the expectations were of those present at the meeting, but MURTHA assumed that this money was the fee to be paid to CRIDEN for arranging the transaction involving MURTHA's assistance for the sheik in return for investment in his district.

MURTHA never discussed with MURPHY any aspect of this meeting with CRIDEN, TONY or MEL and he was never approached by MURPHY regarding any subject even remotely involving them.

THOMPSON, however, spoke to MURTHA and told him that a deal could be made with TONY and MEL. THOMPSON did not specifically describe the nature of the deal but MURTHA assumed that THOMPSON's concern was with investments in the district and THOMPSON never stated to him that he received any money.

MURTHA did not believe that either MURPHY or THOMPSON received any money from TONY or MEL, directly or indirectly.

MURTHA admitted, after being asked by interviewing agents, having met with CRIDEN and THOMPSON in THOMPSON'S office prior to the meeting with TONY and MEL. MURTHA described the meeting as a short one in which investments for their districts were discussed and either THOMPSON or CRIDEN told MURTHA that he should go over and meet with TONY and MEL.

MURTHA last spoke to CRIDEN on Monday, January 21, 1980 in a telephone conversation in which he told CRIDEN to get things started regarding investments in the community. MURTHA has not spoken to CRIDEN since.

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MURTHA stated that he may have made statements which may appear to indicate he had knowledge of payoffs being made to THOMPSON or MURPHY, but explained that he had no knowledge of payoffs to them. He was desirous of obtaining substantial investment in his district and this was his viewpoint regarding the term "deal". If an offer of a payoff was made to him, MURTHA did not consider it as such.